

## CHAPTER 8.

# INTENTIONAL INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR FUTURE FACULTY: A FOCUS ON GRANT AND PROFESSIONAL WRITING

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***Abstract:** This chapter examines the role of institutional support for doctoral students and early-career faculty, emphasizing grant writing and professional materials. Using grounded theory, I connect the development of academic identity with targeted writing support, showing that external training in faculty skills significantly aids students' sense of belonging and professional success.*

Authors in writing and composition studies have declared a need to examine how graduate students transition into academia (Yancey, 2013) and to critically address increasing racial diversity in the field (Carter-Tod, 2019; Mueller & Ruiz, 2017). Writing studies is also uniquely situated because the practice of writing is involved in so many stages of beginning and maintaining an academic career and because writing is often inseparable from one's identity. Yancey's (2013) special issue on the profession in *College Composition and Communication* called for an examination into how graduate students transition into academia and showed "a variegated portrait of the profession" (p. 8). However, few studies leveraged knowledge about inclusive graduate student development as future faculty to address why individuals with minoritized identities are not joining the professorate. Thus, I use the literature in higher education about graduate student belonging as future faculty to inform the existing, inclusive efforts across writing and composition studies.

Given the well-studied topics of graduate student teaching and second language development pertaining to graduate student development as faculty, I endeavor to show how intentional writing development has implications for graduate students' sense of belonging within their academic and professional communities in the humanities and social sciences. First, a review of the research

on graduate student writing development and sense of belonging is provided, with close attention to the experiences of students with minoritized identities. Then, I present and discuss a study that used a grounded approach and thematically analyzed six semi-structured interviews with doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences at a public, predominately white, R1 institution. In the results, I featured my participants' suggestions and advice to fellow graduate students, faculty mentors, and program administrators. Exploration into this area is important to stakeholders who are invested in improving the experience of graduate students who are developing into faculty and increasing opportunities for their success. This chapter addresses the implications of minoritized graduate student writing development on students' senses of belonging within their disciplines, with focus on these questions:

1. What are the required, yet implicit skills graduate students must learn as future faculty writers?
2. Where and how do graduate students learn to become faculty writers?
3. How have training experiences in faculty writing affected participants' sense of belonging in academia and within their respective disciplines?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Professional development (PD) is the experience of “multidimensional growth” engendered by traditional academic experiences, mentoring, peer relations, introspection, training, and supervision (Ducheny et al., 1997). Teaching and research skills are the most common purposes and topics of PD and are overwhelmingly represented among studies about formal graduate student development (Brill et al., 2014; Rizzolo et al., 2016). However, graduate student definitions and expectations of PD extend beyond teaching and research. Ducheny et al. (1997), in a study of 604 psychology graduate students' definitions of PD, found that PD was not perceived as discrete, event-based skills training. Instead, they found that PD is a complex process of incorporating “personal and professional experiences, profession-based and individual values, skills and areas of expertise, educational background, and the establishment of professional relationships” (p. 89). Given the individualistic definition of PD according to graduate students, further research is needed that examines how graduate students obtain writing skills that prepare them as faculty, such as the writing of grant applications and job letters.

Of all the topics of PD, writing development beyond the disciplines (e.g., job materials and grant writing) is least represented in the literature and is one of the most high-stakes and personal topics addressed (Austin & McDaniels,

2006; Mitic & Okahana, 2021). As used in this chapter, the term *academic* writing differs from *professional* writing in that the former refers to skills situated within disciplinary conventions in research, teaching, or other scholarly work. This study is concerned with professional writing, which describes transferable writing skills, ranging from grant applications and writing for the job market or career advancement. In most institutions, writing training for graduate students entails mentorship with faculty advisors on the topics of academic writing, research, and teaching (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Rose, 2012).

But the role of faculty also includes writing in administrative contexts, such as securing research funding (Austin & McDaniels, 2006) and preparing job materials (Dadas, 2013). Shortcomings in training have implications for a lower sense of belonging in academia, especially for those with minoritized identities (Strayhorn, 2019).

## WHY BELONGING MATTERS

Several authors have defined a sense of belonging, but most of the studies have done so with undergraduate students. Sense of belonging is a context-dependent feeling associated with being a valued and supported member of one or more communities at an institution (Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Hausmann et al., 2007; Strayhorn, 2019). Hurtado and Carter (1997), in a foundational study of belonging, argued that belonging is not integration or assimilation, as such a model implies that minoritized individuals must normalize by adhering to the dominant cultures within an institution. Belonging matters particularly for students with minoritized identities because it is associated with academic persistence (Strayhorn, 2019) and is fostered through identity-affirming cultures (Hurtado & Carter, 1997) and positive and authentic relationships with peers and faculty (Meeuwisse et al., 2010). There have been relatively fewer studies of how graduate students experience belonging and the implications of it on outcomes. Some studies suggest that belonging is “markedly different” for graduate students (Gardner & Barnes, 2007, p. 369), giving impetus for this study, since writing professional materials is one of the ways that graduate students gain acceptance into their discipline.

This chapter focuses on the minoritized identities pertaining to ethnicity, race, and international student status, because these identity markers are referred to when calls to diversify the writing discipline are made (Carter-Tod, 2019; Mueller & Ruiz, 2017). Belonging helps those with minoritized identities feel like they are valued members of their discipline, especially when others in the discipline are white (Ore et al., 2021; Strayhorn, 2019). The topic of race in the field has long been a focus for many scholars, such as Victor Villanueva

(1993) and Asao Inoue (2019). But few scholars have considered how learning professional writing skills may influence graduate students belonging in their disciplines. Writing professional materials are often not formally taught (i.e., in a course) and lack of skill composing them can be a bottleneck for entry into and belonging in academia.

For whom and to what extent is belonging an issue? There are few national, longitudinal studies on graduate student transition into professional academia. In a 10-year longitudinal study, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that 23.3 percent of those who enrolled in a doctoral degree program between 1993 and 2003 were “no longer enrolled and had not obtained a degree” 10 years later (Nevill et al., 2007, p. vi). Nevill et al. showed that many factors are related to graduate persistence, but “these relationships may reflect more complexity among multiple factors” and are worth pursuing further (p. 55). The relatively lower rates of completion are often linked to the recurring theme of a feeling of isolation for graduate students (Strayhorn, 2019) or lack of institutional support in the form of peer and faculty mentorship (Mitic & Okahana, 2021). More intentional institutional support is needed given the implications for graduate student belonging, especially for students with minoritized identities.

## PROFESSIONAL WRITING AND MINORITIZED GRADUATE STUDENTS

The Council of Graduate Schools’ report on the value, timing, and participation in PhD professional development (PD,  $n=4,370$ ) found career preparation and grant writing to be among the most important skills according to graduate students (Mitic & Okahana, 2021). Job market preparation and grant writing are two areas that are commonly addressed as missing (Heflinger & Doykos, 2016). Compared to other similarly valued skills, 70 percent of respondents noted that opportunities for training in grant writing were either not offered or respondents were unaware of them (Mitic & Okahana, 2021). Indeed, international professional organizations, such as the Consortium on Graduate Communication, provide help to members in at least 27 countries. However, help remains behind a paywall and is an extra step for industrious or well-connected graduate students.

Academic perseverance and professional identity development have been linked with mentorship and support (Brill et al., 2014). Graduate students are motivated to seek training and development because they desire to develop a professional identity within an academic community (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Ducheny et al., 1997). Strayhorn (2019), in a mixed methods study of 360 graduate students at 15 different institutions, found formal and informal

socialization, defined as meaningful engagement and exposure to peers and faculty, a critical aspect of a sense of belonging. Additionally, having a sense of belonging contributes to students' performance, satisfaction, and success in doctoral programs (Curtin et al., 2013; Strayhorn, 2019). Pascale (2018) found that graduate students experienced belonging through perceived peer support, perceived faculty support, class comfort, perceived isolation, and empathetic faculty understanding. Pascale also found that graduate students, dissimilar to undergraduates, valued balancing school with life when forming a sense of belonging. This suggests that institutional initiatives for graduate student belonging should consider incorporating students' families to some extent.

The existing studies on positive graduate student belonging point to two major influences: mentorship with faculty and socialization within the academic community, especially for students with minoritized identities (Le et al., 2016; Curtin et al., 2013). Minority and international students often experience additional labor for social adjustment including, but not limited to: (a) language difficulties and cultural differences; (b) unfamiliar patterns of classroom interactions, academic norms, and conventions; (c) inadequate learning support; (d) difficulties in making friends with domestic students; and (e) lack of sense of belonging (Le et al., 2016). Curtin et al. (2013) compared the experiences of belonging and academic self-concept for 841 domestic and international students and concluded that international students are less likely to cite belonging as an important factor to their research and academic success.

On the other hand, domestic minority graduate students value belonging and, compared to their majority counterparts, are statistically less likely to find faculty mentors with similar cultural backgrounds because of the shortage of minority faculty in higher education for the majority of disciplines. But those who find supportive faculty mentors give effusive credit for their openness and flexibility (Le et al., 2016). Using ANCOVA, Curtin et al. (2013) found within-group differences in how domestic and international students experienced advisor support (p. 108). Support, defined as professional and socializing advice and emotional support, was found to directly improve students' sense of belonging and academic self-concept.

## **FILLING THE GAPS IN FACULTY MENTORSHIP**

The importance of faculty mentorship on graduate student belonging and success cannot be emphasized enough, as reviewed in the previous section. While this practice is highly individualized, the quality of the writing training also depends on graduate students' working relationship with their mentor, which makes for uneven training. In general, minority and international students rely

on a mixture of strategies to receive training, including self-development among peers and on-campus resources (Holley & Caldwell, 2012; Le et al., 2016). Nonetheless, many students turn to institutional resources for self-development because of a perceived lack of expertise from faculty (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Heflinger & Doykos, 2016). Faculty tend to train on matters immediately relevant to students' academic roles (e.g., teaching and research assistant), but teaching and research are only a part of the responsibility associated with faculty positions (Austin & McDaniels, 2006). Indeed, Dadas's (2013) study on job market preparedness among 57 scholars in rhetoric and composition showed how not all graduate students were adequately trained to write as faculty. Some students seek additional help in centers for professional development, such as centers of teaching and learning or career centers (Rose, 2012).

In a mixed methods study of 688 doctoral students at a mid-sized South-eastern U.S. university, Heflinger and Doykos (2016) found many notable gaps in training regarding leading research teams, supervising others, teaching, and grant writing. Many students suggested the creation of structured, cross-discipline collaborative mentorships to better prepare students and reduce disciplinary "silos" (Heflinger & Doykos, 2016, pp. 351–352). Along those lines, Austin and McDaniels (2016) add that grant-making skills are "important for future faculty members to start to develop while in graduate school" (p. 425).

When present, grant writing workshops have been helpful in the professional development of graduate students. In one quantitative case study of a grant writing preparation workshop for communications graduate students, respondents had "overwhelmingly positive experiences" (Mackert et al., 2017, p. 246). Respondents felt the program provided great value, improved their writing skills, gave them skills to pursue funding in the future, and helped them secure tenure-track faculty positions. Their program is designed to train future health communication scholars in finding funding and submitting applications as faculty and researchers. Research on PD and senses of belonging for graduate students suggests that such a well-received program may have had a positive effect on the professional identity of the participants (Curtin et al., 2013; Posselt, 2021; Strayhorn, 2019). Mackert et al. (2016) did not extend the scope of the study to determine whether their programming had any farther-reaching effects, such as sense of belonging.

In summation, professional development is imperative for engendering a sense of belonging within the academic and professional community for graduate students. A sense of belonging has been linked with perseverance in students and, by extension, the subsequent job candidate (Curtin et al., 2013; Strayhorn, 2019). While factors such as financial support aid in creating a sense of

belonging, budgets are often out of the control of faculty. Institutions and faculty can use existing programming and mentorships to develop doctoral students' skills and grant and professional writing to increase their senses of belonging.

## METHOD

This study was conducted with respondents from a large, Midwestern, doctoral degree-granting public institution classified with "very high research activity." According to institutional data, the majority (65.4%) of doctoral degrees are conferred through the business school, college of arts and sciences, school of public and environmental affairs, law school, school of engineering, and school of education. All interviews were recorded and kept following IRB-compliant procedures.

## SAMPLE

Six respondents (Table 8.1) were recruited via email to participate in semi-structured interviews about their experiences pertaining to professional development resources and the opportunities available to them. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The respondents were either doctoral students ( $n=2$ ), doctoral candidates ( $n=2$ ), or alumni with recent successful job placements ( $n=2$ ). Respondents were either enrolled in or had just graduated from programs in the humanities or social sciences. Additionally, all participants experienced the entirety of their doctoral program at the same institution.

**Table 8.1 Demographics of Respondents**

Respondent	Gender	Race / Ethnicity	Educational Status	Discipline	Residency Status
Moirra	Female	Black	Doc Student	Counseling Psychology	International
Fernando	Male	Latino	Doc Student	Spanish and Portuguese	International
Kel	Female	White	Doc Candidate	English	Domestic
Jackie	Female	Black	Doc Candidate	Higher Education	Domestic
Su Hyun	Female	Asian	Alumni	Literacy Studies	International
Christine	Female	White	Alumni	English	Domestic

*Note: All names have been changed.*

## DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data collection and analysis followed the practices common to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). Created by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss in the mid-1960s, grounded theory is a qualitative, inductive approach where researchers develop categories and theories about a phenomenon, rather than test a hypothesis. Constructivist grounded theory is an ideal tool for interpreting trends in research participants' lives because of its main principles: interpretation without preconceived theories, a deeper read of data through an iterative analytical process, and the understanding that social phenomena are interpreted through researchers' subjectivity (Charmaz, 2014). In essence, researchers who use grounded theory see a phenomenon and build questions that extract both the context and the interviewee's experiences and meanings. In this case, the research questions and interview questions (Appendix A) were formed after I was made aware of the experiences of alienation from a perceived lack of writing training in my position in graduate student development at my institution.

The interview data for each participant were closely read for markers of meaning from the interviewees, such as conversational cues and choice of words to describe their experiences. Researcher reflections and analysis of the interviews were recorded in a memo. Next, codes that emerged from each interview served as points of comparison for the next person's interview, and so on. The codes and data then helped the researcher form additional areas to explore in subsequent interviews (Charmaz, 2014). From there, researcher reflections in memos defined preliminary analytic categories of experiences for the respondents.

## POSITIONALITY

Researchers are the primary interpretive instruments that are shaped by their larger social and cultural context; thus, a positionality statement places known biases at the forefront. I embody a diversity of identities and understand that the intersection of my dominant and nondominant identities shapes my worldview. At the time of this study, I was a graduate student in the work of graduate student professional development; as such, this topic is professionally and personally meaningful. My interpretations, as a result, reflect my perspective. To mitigate that, and to share some of the power in meaning making, the voices and experiences of students are featured as much as possible. Additionally, I consciously chose not to compare students to straight, white, cisgender, heterosexual men, who are often overrepresented in study samples, because doing so implicitly holds them as the ideal, comparative standard, thus reinforcing existing hierarchical structures of power. It is my intention to add complexity and authenticity



to the portrayal of those studied, disrupting the common monolithic portrayal of underrepresented and minoritized students.

## RESULTS

Emergent codes included graduate students' experiences of professional development across the humanities and social sciences within one institution, a separation between preparation for academic and administrative/professional writing, and how graduate students addressed the perceived shortcomings in their writing training.

### GRADUATE PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND BELONGING

Starting questions in grounded theory are often the "what" and "how," aimed at eliciting participants' experiences (Charmaz, 2014). Though coding general experiences was rather straightforward, it is nonetheless helpful to establish a starting point for comparison. Participants revealed how their perspectives and expectations of receiving PD changed as they progressed through their graduate careers. Many described a "growing up" or adopting a realistic perspective of the outcome of a PhD colored by job prospects. Others expressed frustration at the lack of training throughout their years in their programs. Ultimately, experiences vary, and training is highly dependent on the mentorship style and availability of the faculty advisor.

At the beginning of their respective doctoral programs, respondents either did not think about professional development for the job market or trusted their programs to help them identify and develop the necessary skills. Christine (white, domestic, alumni in English) noted that, at the beginning of her program, she was "naïve about the importance of job market training." Fernando (Latino, international doctoral student in Spanish and Portuguese) chastised himself for thinking that a doctoral program was just "more undergraduate college, taking classes and writing papers." He said that, while he did think about his career, he did not think about the details, and thought the department would prepare him. Kel (white, domestic, doctoral candidate in English) remarked that she expected her department to function as a directory, or "hub," to external resources for professional development.

On the other hand, Jackie (Black, domestic, doctoral candidate in Education) and Su Hyun (Asian, international, alumni in Literacy Studies) were very cognizant of the need to tie their graduate experiences to their future careers "from day one." Both recall attending departmental and external professional development workshops even as a first-year student. Jackie admits to being very

career-driven and stated, “When I decided to go back to school, I knew that I had to bother people and make the most of everything because I didn’t want to be stuck in a job again!” Su Hyun was also particularly career-focused, expressing high stakes as an international student pursuing a doctoral degree for her career: “My whole family relies on me. So, I’m meeting everyone and attending all different workshops and webinars.”

Across all disciplines, race/ethnicity, nationality, and levels of career drive, minority identity, and discipline, respondents’ expectations about professional development were largely not met within their departments and schools. Many, such as Moira and Kel, expressed frustration. Moira is an international Black doctoral student in counseling psychology, a department within the school of education. She said, “I’m not from here. I just want an understanding of how things work.” When asked about how much training she received about writing, she said, “Grants? Umm, zero. That’s the thing. Even as the support for the program is teaching us how to write articles, even quals and writing articles for journals, there is no structural support that you get. They just expect that you’re going to do it.” Kel acknowledged that grants were important to her graduate career and perhaps to her future faculty life, but her department did not provide any training. Conversely, Su Hyun only had positive things to say about her faculty advisor: “If he didn’t know [the answer], he knew someone who knew.” Fernando said that his experiences were mixed, “[his faculty advisor] was very helpful with getting papers published. It’s like wow, you’re giving comments at 10pm? Thank you!” But he was disappointed in the amount of help he received in securing grants for research. Fernando recalled struggling to know “what was right” when starting to draft grant proposals for his dissertation research and didn’t know where to turn for help.

Ultimately, Moira provided a great explanation of the variation in graduate experiences of professional development: “It’s at the level of the individual faculty rather than a structural component in the program to help people.” Kel added, “The degree and quality of training really varies and is dependent on advisors.”

## TRAINED AND UNTRAINED WRITING

Though respondents spoke about writing as a monolithic skill, three types of writing emerged in the coding: (a) job materials; (b) administrative, professional writing; and (c) grant applications. Across all three types, students who participated in workshops or collaborated with faculty members to obtain skills described themselves as having been trained. Conversely, students who completed such writing tasks without training described it as “untrained writing.” When

respondents, especially minoritized students, experienced a lack of training, they expressed self-doubt about their academic progress or viability on the job market. Quality training in professional writing helped international students' confidence as job candidates and their sense of belonging in the discipline and department. Su Hyun explained that professional writing was difficult at times because she was uncomfortable with the "braggy" tone in job materials for American positions. Her department did not train her, but her advisor helped edit her materials. Not all training is equal; a messy writing workshop appeared to have deleterious effects on belonging. Fernando described his professional seminar, a required class for doctoral students in his department, as "chaotic." The instructor used too many student-led lessons that resulted in a confused cohort. He stated, "I found the training to be alienating, especially because I am international, and less and less like I belonged in the field." Christine felt similarly to Fernando, despite having a different discipline. She remembers thinking, "Oh I've done everything wrong" in terms of applying for future jobs. Christine noted that the workshop "was very R1 oriented and in terms of support." The training consisted of reading samples individually, drafting without instruction, and graduate student peer editing. She summed up: "There was no discussion of genre. No discussion of what it does and what should it do and what it does well."

Two respondents from social sciences also felt unprepared in their field practicum experiences due to a perceived insufficiency in their training for administrative writing. Moira, an international Black counseling psychology doctoral student, remarked about the gap between what she learned in the classroom and what was expected in her counseling practicum: "The department did teach us some assessments, but what was a little bit of letdown is that they thought we should learn in practicum. And practicum expected me to know them already." She trained herself in administrative writing for her practicum by reading her supervisor's previous reports to learn the professional genre. Su Hyun agreed regarding classroom practicum, stating that she had to learn how to write and give feedback to her students in her first year of teaching by herself, not from her classes or her advisor.

Grant writing was largely untrained. In some cases, grant writing was part of a required academic benchmark, such as qualifying exams. Moira stated, "There's been no real training in that regard. [The program expects] us to pick it up explicitly in program experience, but no one teaches it." In a similar vein, Jackie reflects on her department's common usage of a grant proposal as a prompt for qualifying exams, though she did not receive any training in her coursework for such a task. She asked emphatically and rhetorically, "Now where was I supposed to know this from?" She said that her experience made her question her future in the program and in the discipline. Jackie stated, "We didn't talk about

grants at all in our classes. I get that they're trying to help us to apply later but writing it first for quals put a bad taste in my mouth" for future grant applications. Fernando echoed Jackie's sentiments when he sought grant funding for his travels to Spain to collect data for his dissertation. He added, "Honestly? I Googled a lot to find examples, wrote something, and my advisor ended up revising all of it. I felt so stupid. Like, I can't do this." For Christine, knowledge of grant writing was more important to her professional roles than her role as a student. As part of her employment as a writing tutor during her doctoral studies, she attended the grant workshops facilitated by the institution's graduate school but did not hear about them from her department. Otherwise, she would not have known about the training.

Three types of professional writing emerged in the code when respondents described their experience in receiving writing training. Respondents described how either the lack of training or the "trial by fire" method of training instilled a low sense of belonging within the discipline and in their department. It appeared that many students either created or joined training external to their departments and schools, as explained in this next section.

### **INDIVIDUALLY BRIDGING THE GAP**

The participants described mixed training experiences in professional writing and job preparation from their departments. Some said that they "felt" the departmental training was insufficient when comparing perceived skills required for faculty positions. Others knew the training was not enough because the departments "had no idea what [they] were doing" when drafting job materials. As such, most respondents experienced disappointment or insecurity about their academic belonging. Respondents sought to supplement perceived shortcomings in professional development with help external to their department, either by asking others for writing help and/or searching for new opportunities to gain skills.

Christine was in a lucky position because she could ask a newly hired faculty member about professional materials in their field, except for a diversity statement, as the faculty member did not prepare one. When Christine found her departmental workshops insufficient, she turned to her institution's center for teaching and learning. She said, "I went to [center for teaching] and learned a lot about writing a diversity statement and pedagogy. [A newly hired faculty member] didn't have to write a diversity statement I think, so he couldn't help me." Others were not as fortunate to have a new hire; however, cold calling and informational interviews seemed to help.

By her second year, Jackie wanted to get more experience before she was on the job market. She recalls, "The squeaky wheel gets oiled or uhh the loud

mouth gets fed you know? I kept asking like can I join you on this research project? Can I be your TA? It worked. And I feel like I got training for writing articles I wouldn't have if I didn't ask." Jackie feels much more prepared for future roles as a teaching and research faculty because of her "cold calling" departmental instructors and institutional administrators. Christine was already on the job market and also did some "cold calling" about jobs, rather than focusing on writing skills. She felt that her departmental workshop on professional writing was not equipping her with the skills that she thought would be helpful. She recalled that all but one of the faculty members in her department "got jobs before diversity statements were a thing." Fernando joined an article-writing group coordinated by the university's writing center. He identified his advisor's greater interest in helping him edit articles rather than start them.

Moira and Kel criticized the need to seek external sources for professional development. They both mentioned how there is never enough time. Moira says she felt as if she was "taking on external experience to gain experience to use and being torn in 1 million directions to meet requirements for the department and job." If her counseling psychology classes trained her in the administrative genre conventions of her profession, she would not have to add more responsibilities to her already overbooked schedule. Graduate students in Kel's English department tried to start up a regular "brown bag [session]" during which different faculty would discuss job preparation, but it fell through from a lack of time. Kel shared that she was "already working two and more jobs; [there's] too much to do and not enough time and not enough money" as a graduate student. There was a strong implication that the department failed when a graduate student had to organize PD for everyone. Overall, participants filled the gaps in their writing training over the course of several steps: observations of necessary skills as future practitioners and faculty, self-assessment of abilities, and reaching out to their social and professional networks to help them secure training not provided by their departments.

## LIMITATIONS

Conducting research faithfully requires acknowledgment of the limitations of this study. This study is limited by qualities common to all studies with small samples at one institution. First, case studies are one snapshot of a status quo for some at a singular point in time. The small sample size makes it impractical to generalize findings; however, the strength of case studies resides in in-depth analysis, and description rather than generalizability. This study aimed to examine the professional development of graduate students as future faculty and how their sense of belonging may have been connected. The findings are limited to

graduate students in the humanities and social sciences by design, as many graduate students in STEM, for example, receive training in grant writing through their co-curricular lab placements (Thiry et al., 2011). Second, not all identities, or aspects of identities, are represented in the sample. It is possible that, with different students, other salient themes and topics would have subsequently emerged. Lastly, this study only shows the view of students who would voluntarily give their time and perspective. Given the topic of the study, engagement in professional development and belonging, an analysis of the students who are inclined toward diligence may allow for loose deductions to the rest of the population. We may never know the experiences and belongingness of students who do not participate in research.

## DISCUSSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Findings suggest that graduate students in the humanities and social sciences need more intentional institutional support for writing skills that they will need as faculty members—namely, on-job materials and grant writing. Considering the variety of contexts in which graduate students write, intentionality requires a direct and purposeful drive when providing writing development for graduate students. Supportive writing development requires sustained effort and mindful timing to fit the busy schedules of graduate students and their faculty mentors. The creation of supportive, intentional writing training is an accessible practice because it negates the need for graduate students to find their own training or supplement training provided by their faculty mentors.

Contrary to Ducheny et al. (1997), this study's respondents spoke of PD as individual events. The respondents also implied that an *ending* point existed in PD as a graduate student, delineated by perceived self-confidence in completing academic and professional tasks. The contradiction may be due to some students' desires to compensate for the alienation felt in their departments. For example, much of Kel's training in professional writing was external to her department and occurred because of her job as a writing tutor, making her feel a sense of belonging with her workplace colleagues. Kel's experiences corroborate the findings in Phillips (2012), which presented graduate writing groups and writing centers as a community of practice for future academics (see Lave & Wenger, 1991). Though Kel received training in professional writing through her job, her department in the humanities did not provide support that engendered a sense of belonging in the department: "My experiences [in professional development] have negatively impacted my sense of belonging in the program and discipline." Su Hyun, on the other hand, had a positive experience. When asked why she thinks so, she said, "I already learned so much culture and writing

coming here. [Learning administrative writing] is just the same.” Additionally, her sense of belonging was positive, like the findings in Le et al. (2016) of other international Asian women.

Respondents unanimously report that job materials, administrative/professional writing (e.g., assessment reports, teaching observations), and grant applications are the required and implicit genres that graduate students must learn, for which they were provided with mixed levels of writing training at the institutional level. Lack of confidence in these genres was often associated with a low professional self-concept or sense of belonging among the participants. They regularly spoke of these three writing contexts having enough variations in tones, audiences, and purpose as to cause uncertainty and confusion for the writer. To prepare future faculty, graduate student development must include professional writing training in the discipline-specific contexts that extend beyond research. For example, writing reports and teaching reviews were only important to Moira and Su Hyun, respectively. Moira, a doctoral student in counseling psychology, taught herself to communicate as a future faculty member by decoding her supervisor’s reports—a common strategy in writing studies. If formal training in this genre was available, it is likely that Moira would not feel alone and discouraged in the field. There is evidence that professional development in writing must distinguish between subgenres and offer discipline-specific content and guidance for positive influence on sense of belonging.

Lastly, graduate students gain external training by operationalizing institutional knowledge or cultural capital about academia. Individuals whose department prefers to do things “in house,” as Christine said, often do not receive advertisements and callouts to institutionally organized workshops from departmental administrators. Instead, Christine had to be connected enough or be on the right email list to become aware of specific offerings for writing training. Fernando, similarly, had to find his own examples of the types of writing his advisor wanted him to do. Others, like Su Hyun, benefitted from knowledge shared by their advisors, who functioned as a signpost to institutional offices. Still others, like Jackie and Christine, who “cold called” administrators and instructors for opportunities, used their cultural and social capital to effectively communicate for employment and informational interviews. The respondents all thought that the responsibility of making students aware of PD opportunities resided with their departments and advisors.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

A few study participants noted the lack of time to engage in PD and other activities as graduate students. Su Hyun would like to remind graduate students that



the same time challenges are true for their advisors; “Everyone is overworked and guards their time.” Participants in this study were most satisfied with help that was external to their department as a starting place for skill development in professional writing. Institutions vary, but most have a center of teaching, a career center, and/or an office of graduate study that may offer assistance in the form of workshops or webinars. These events are attended by fellow graduate students in similar situations and experts in writing job materials and grant writing. While socialization is not the same as feeling a sense of belonging (Soto, 2002), it can be a start.

Writing training for graduate students that is external to their disciplines can help identify and edit the discipline-specific idiosyncrasies that may be a detriment when writing to audiences outside of their field. As Christine noted,

Attending grant and instructor training at [the center for teaching] was instrumental to my development as a professor because it helps me see what sorts of things are specific to my field and what things cross my field. When on the job market, you’re going to be talking about things not necessarily in your field.

With each new position, one must start relearning and building capital again. These types of training would benefit from the teaching practices from writing studies—decoding the genre in Moira’s case or, in Fernando’s case, gaining familiarity in types of writing by finding examples.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATORS

When asked for changes they could make to the education they received in their department, participants in this study gave conservative suggestions while keeping in mind the limitations of resources. Overall, their comments echoed those found by Rose: “The top recommendation is to prioritize professional skills training for graduate students in ways that will ensure the mobilization of their knowledge and skills ... in a variety of workplace settings” (2012, p. 28).

For job materials, departments should collaborate with centers of teaching to deliver presentations that cover the basics, freeing time for advisors to give discipline-specific training. As Christine so bluntly stated, “Some faculty in my department, especially if they’ve been out of the market for a while, just aren’t equipped to teach people how to write these materials.” Outsourcing some of the job material writing development allows graduate students to benefit from center consultants’ ongoing research about the genre. Faculty advisors, especially those who were newly hired, can supply the disciplinary culture and expertise.



A PD workshop could be housed within an office of graduate studies. Moira suggested a “formal class or workshop to learn grant writing or intro to article writing because faculty vary in expertise, and you can be sure you are picking up all the skills that are important.” To this, I am reminded of Fernando criticizing his workshops for being too messy because they were student-led. In that instance, his cohort was a group of “clueless people desperate for a job leading other clueless people.” Future studies should examine whether training opportunities external to departments are useful for graduate students. And, given the discipline-specific needs and time demands of graduate students, it may be worth testing the utility in different formats of the course: as a standalone training course or training sprinkled throughout all courses within a graduate program. What is most important for the success of the workshop is attention to the three subgenres and providing structure for graduate students to continue to grow and improve.

## CONCLUSION

Writing studies scholars have called for a re-examination of how graduate students transition to academic roles (Yancey, 2013), a re-examination of race and labor in the discipline (Inoue, 2019; Osorio et al., 2021) and a diversification of the discipline (de Mueller & Ruiz, 2017; Ore et al., 2021). And writing is simultaneously interwoven with identity and a means for graduate students to enter academia. Writing training has been linked with graduate students’ sense of belonging, especially for students from historically underrepresented minority groups (Pascale, 2018; Strayhorn, 2019). A sense of belonging has a direct effect on students’ persistence; thus, professional development contributes toward student success (Strayhorn, 2019). Therefore, writing training in professional materials has direct implications for graduate students with minoritized identities to feel a sense of belonging in their disciplines and in academia. Professional writing has distinct subgenres that require their own focus in graduate student professional development, such as writing for job materials and developing grant proposals. By including opportunities for aspiring faculty and professionals to develop appropriate writing skills beyond research, institutions are promoting a sense of belonging while preparing them with the competencies they need to fulfill all aspects of their work.

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APPENDIX A. LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What expectations did you have about how the institution would prepare you professionally when you first entered your program?
  - How were those expectations met or not met?
- How important is/was receiving professional/job training in a doc program to sense of belonging?
- In your opinion or experience, what are the required, yet implicit, professional skills that graduate students must learn as future faculty?
- What training did you receive about applying for funding ops (grants/ fellowships) and future jobs?
  - What training do/did you wish you had?
- Anything else you would like to add about institutional support for doctoral students' professional development?

APPENDIX B. CODE CHART

Theme	Codes	Sub-codes
1. Graduate Perceptions of Professional Development and Belonging	1.1 Professional development	1.1.1 Faculty mentorship experiences
		1.1.2 Impact of mentorship on career development
		1.1.3 Writing skill development
	1.2 Sense of belonging	1.2.1 Departmental community
		1.2.2 Peer belonging
		1.2.3 Belonging in discipline

Theme	Codes	Sub-codes
2. Trained and Untrained Writing	2.1 Job materials	2.1.1 Sources of training 2.1.2 Formal training insufficient
	2.2 Administrative, professional writing	2.2.1 Sources of training
	2.3 Grant applications	2.3.1 No training
3. Individually Bridging the Gap	3.1 Self- and peer-assessment	3.1.1 Seeking training in the moment 3.1.2 Peers' writing feedback
	3.2 Experiential advice	3.2.1 New hires, recent alumni, informational interviews